

Ser. No. 10/030,070
Internal Docket No. PF990046

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Remarks/Arguments

The Office Action mailed November 15, 2006, has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 4, 8, 7, 10 and 11 are amended. Claim 9 has been cancelled. The claims have been amended to more clearly and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regards as his invention. No new matter is believed to be added by the present amendment.

Rejection of claims 4-12 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by DeWeese et al. (2005/0262542)

Applicant submits that for at least the reasons discussed below amended claims 4, 7 and 11, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not anticipated under 35 USC 102(e) by DeWeese. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the method includes the step of: "... establishing a communication between said first user and said second user through the server, wherein anonymous communication is maintained between the users by the server by excluding identity data in the transmissions between the first user and the other users (emphasis added)." That is, the communications between the users remains anonymous. Claims 7 and 11 have been amend to similarly recite this feature.

Support for the amendment is provided, for example, on page 6, lines 20-23, which states "An important advantage of the invention is that the connection is managed anonymously by the server. It means the user phone numbers or addresses are known exclusively to the server. This is an important protection for the users." Applicant submits that nowhere does DeWeese disclose or suggest this feature.

Applicant respectfully submits that DeWeese fails to disclose linking a user to a chat group without transmitting identity data in the transmissions between the users. DeWeese discloses a television chat system that allows television viewers to engage in real time communication in chat groups with other users while watching television. DeWeese discloses on paragraph 81 that a first user, "the household user," can introduce identity data about another user, "the non-household user," and

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household user," and that the communication with this other user are possible:

"FIG. 6 illustrates a display screen 160 that the set-top box application may present on a user's television when the user indicates a desire to enter identity data relating to a non-household user. The non-household user's name may be entered in box 162 and the non-household user's address may be entered in box 164. A user's address is a unique identifier assigned to a particular user which allows a chat server to transmit real-time communications and chat requests to the proper recipient" (emphasis added).

DeWeese also discloses that "non-household user's data may be stored in the set-top box" (see paragraph 83). Clearly if the server does not transmit any information about the other user, the identity data of the other user would not be stored in the set-top box.

Further, DeWeese provides particular reasons as to why the identity data of the other user is stored in the set top box. DeWeese, at least in paragraph 130 and those that follow, discloses:

A user has an opportunity to send a chat request to other users who may be interested in joining a chat group. A chat request is a request for other users (of e.g. a television set-top box application or interactive television program guide) to join a chat group"

If a user can launch a communication to a specified other user, the identity of the other user is known for the first user, and at least the address of the second user is communicate from the first user to the second user. Moreover, in the next paragraph (§ 131), DeWeese discloses:

The user may also have the ability to block all incoming chat requests for a period of time or indefinitely by selecting option 381. This feature allows a user to maintain privacy. The user may block incoming chat requests from certain individuals by entering their names or addresses in regions 383. The user may also program the chat system so that it only allows chat requests from certain individuals to be received by that user's set-top box. The user may enter the names or addresses of these individuals in regions 390. The user can decline to join any of the chat groups that he is being requested to join by pressing a Cancel button on the remote control.

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Since the user can block chat request from certain identified users, or allows chat request from other identified users, the user must know these user identities, and the user's set top box must be able to compare the identity data of the users that sent request with identity data stored in the memory of the user's set top box.

Therefore, DeWeese fails to disclose or suggest the feature "establishing a communication between said first user and said second user through the server, wherein anonymous communication is maintained between the users by the server by excluding identity data in the transmissions between the first user and the other users" as recited in amended claim 1.

Applicant also submits that one skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify the teachings of DeWeese to provide anonymous communication as recited in claim 1. The above description makes clear that the system of DeWeese system is specifically arranged to transmit the identity data to the users, and there is no suggestion that it is possible that this system operates in the desired manner if the identity data is not transmitted to the various users.

In the present invention, the fact that no identity data relative to the user is transmitted between the first user and the other users allows for maintaining anonymous communication between the users. For solving the problem of anonymity of the communication, one skilled in the art finds an entirely different solution in DeWeese. For example, page 6 paragraph 76, of DeWeese discloses:

"The user may also enter a nickname for himself in box 133. A nickname may used for anonymity in a chat group or as a creative pseudonym related to the chat topic. Alternatively, screen 120 may provide the user with an opportunity to enter an icon that identifies the user in the chat room rather than a nickname."

Therefore, one skilled in the art may be motivated use a nickname or an icon, but DeWeese does not teach or suggest a solution wherein the server establishes a communication between two users without transmitting the identity data between the users. With the claimed invention, the anonymity is guaranteed because a user

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because a user cannot retrieve the identity data of another user.

Further, according to DeWeese, if a user desires privacy of the communication, the solution is provided, for example, on paragraph 152:

"The display remote control gives the user additional privacy when sending and receiving messages in a chat group. The display remote may also be used for sending and receiving chat requests. The display remote control is therefore a two-way interactive remote in that messages may be composed and sent, as well as received and read by the user."

With this solution, a user can introduce information without being spied by any other user. By this manner, the other users that are close to the sender, do not know who sent the chat request. This solution is totally different with the claimed invention.

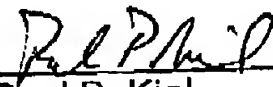
In view of the above, applicant submits that DeWeese fails to disclose or suggest a notable feature of amended claim 1, and as such, amended claim 1, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not anticipated by DeWeese. As claims 7 and 11 have been amended to include a similar limitation, applicant submits that claims 7 and 11, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not anticipated for at least the same reasons as those discussed above, with respect to amended claim 1.

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Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejections it is believed that, in view of the preceding amendments and remarks, this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly then, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at (609) 734-6815, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled.

Respectfully submitted,

Philippe Letellier

By: 
Paul P. Kiel
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 40,677

THOMSON Licensing LLC
PO Box 5312
Princeton, NJ 08543-5312

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